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**ACLA CALLS BAUCUS 'MEDICARE IMPROVEMENT ACT' A TRIPLE PLAY FOR
LAB SERVICES, GRAND SLAM FOR BENEFICIARIES**

Washington, DC – Senator Max Baucus (D-MT), Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, included repeal of the Medicare Laboratory Competitive Bidding Demonstration project in “The Medicare Improvement for Patients and Providers Act of 2008” (S 3101), legislation he introduced late Friday, June 6th.

“S 3101 is a legislative triple play for important laboratory services and a grand slam for Medicare beneficiaries.” said American Clinical Laboratory Association (ACLA) President Alan Mertz. “ACLA wholeheartedly supports this bill which would repeal the ill-conceived lab competitive bidding demo, extend the so-called ‘TC Grandfather clause’ for 18 months, and avert a 10.1% cut in the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule which is due to occur on July 1.”

ACLA has long opposed the competitive bidding project because it imposes unworkable requirements, ignores the complexity of laboratory services and the differences in types of tests and laboratories, and raises serious concerns about the quality of care for beneficiaries. The Baucus legislation would address the single largest issue affecting the clinical laboratory industry today.

In April 2008, a federal district court in San Diego issued a preliminary injunction halting the competitive bidding demonstration slated to begin in San Diego on July 1, 2008. The District judge cited the potential for “irreparable harm” to Medicare beneficiaries and the laboratories who serve them.

The extension of the “TC grandfather” clause would extend for 18 months the ability of independent clinical laboratories to bill Medicare directly for the technical component (TC) of surgical pathology services provided to hospital patients.

ACLA represents local, regional and national clinical laboratories throughout the United States and has been a leader in the campaign to repeal the Medicare competitive bidding demonstration project. ACLA has also backed legislation permanently extending the “TC grandfather” clause.

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